

16. An Introduction to Networking

JUST THE FACTS: The purpose of this activity is to introduce participants to the process of networking and to help them begin to understand its relevance to the career development process.

Time 20 minutes

Materials • Chart paper or white board and markers

Directions Ask participants the following question: “How do people find jobs?” [List responses]. If the following were not discussed, consider including some or all of them on the list: personal contacts, secondary or post-secondary career centers, employer websites, Craigslist, Internet job sites (such as monster.com, snagajob.com, simplyhired.com or indeed.com), One-Stop Career Centers, walk-ins, professional or trade associations.

Ask: “Did you know that approximately 80% of jobs today are NOT advertised?” Discuss: “If employers are not advertising, how are people finding jobs?”

DISCUSSION POINTS: • Talking to or contacting people you know to find job leads is the most effective way to find a job.

- Most of us find a job through personal contacts—people we already know such as our friends and family, doctor, dentist, and people we meet when we go shopping and during our normal





everyday lives. Personal contacts are also the people that our friends and family know.

- Approximately 60% of job hunters find their new job with the help of friends, family members, and acquaintances.

Break the group into smaller groups of three or four. Considering the fact that people most often find jobs by interacting with other people, ask each group to spend five minutes developing a list of five strategies they might use when looking for a job (who could they talk to, what could they say, etc.). Strategies should be geared to creating as many ways as possible to tell others you are looking for a job.

Conclusion Ask for a representative from each group to list the strategies they developed. Inform participants that what they just accomplished is called (traditional) Professional Networking. Learning how to network takes time and commitment. It means seeking out people you know, people who can offer advice, as well as potential friends, and building on these relationships. Networking is finding ways to “get known” by other who can help you in your job search. It is an “active” process for developing new relationships and new opportunities.

Journaling Activity There are three types of people in this world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what just happened. A networker is someone who makes things happen. Think about a possible career goal you have. What is it? What can you do to develop your networking skills to get more information about this career?



Extension Activity Discuss the concept of the informational interview. Informational interviewing is a networking activity important to the career development and career exploration process. An informational interview is an interview with a person who is doing the kind of work in which you are interested. It is an excellent technique to use when you want to: explore different career options; learn more about certain occupations; and/or begin to network with people who can help you in your job search. Although it is an effective job search tool, it's very important to remember that the primary purpose of an informational interview is to obtain information, not a job.

Help participants arrange for an informational interview (either on or off site). Prep participants on the types of questions to ask (i.e., what is important to them), the importance of asking for a business card, and what to do after the interview.

Question examples:

- How did you decide on this field of work?
- How did you get into this field of work?
- What do you like best about your work?
- What do you like the least?
- What is a typical day or week like for someone in your occupation?
- What kind of skills, education, and/or training would I need to get into this area?
- What personal qualities are necessary for someone in this occupation?
- What is a typical entry-level salary? (Do NOT ask how much the person you are interviewing earns!)
- Do you know someone else doing this kind of work that I could talk to for my research?

Follow-up the interview with a thank you note. In it, suggest mentioning the specific information that you found to be particularly interesting or helpful. Let the person know that you



appreciate him/her letting you ask questions and that the information provided will be valuable to you

18. Using Social Media to Network

This activity gives participants the opportunity to debate the pros and cons of using social media to network.

JUST THE FACTS: Google, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, MySpace. These names have all become synonymous with social networking in the early 21st century. In fact, social media has become so popular it has its very own language! For example, you can “Google” or be “Googled.” You can “friend” or “unfriend” someone on Facebook. And you can send tweets to update people on your every activity every moment of the day using your Twitter account. [Believe it or not, in the Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, “text,” “tweet,” and “Google” are all listed as verbs!]

Time 20 minutes

Materials • None required

Directions Ask the group the following questions: 1. Stand up if you have a Facebook account? (now sit down) 2. Stand up and turn around if you communicate with others by texting? (now sit down) 3. Raise your hand if you have ever Googled someone or something?

Now, read the following aloud (and/or have it written for participants to read while listening): In May of 2010, the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., found that half of American teenagers (ages 12-17) send 50 or more text messages a day,





with one-third sending more than 100 a day. Two-thirds of the texters surveyed said they were more likely to use their cellphones to text friends than to call them. Fifty-four percent said they text friends once a day, but only 33 percent said they talk to their friends face-to-face on a daily basis. Many adults are concerned that for young people growing up today (in the age of “social media”), online interactions might be eliminating real-world experiences that help to develop emotions, personal connections, and the necessary communication skills to succeed in the workplace and society. The fear is that this may impact how they operate in the world as adults, and how they build adult relationships.

Go around the room and ask the group to count off by ones and twos and divide participants into two groups. Each group will be asked to discuss and list no fewer than five reasons why they believe using social media (including Facebook and texting) will not only improve the growth and development of youth today, but help them to develop higher level communication skills than those of their parents and/or grandparents.

Each group should elect a recorder and a reporter and will be given seven minutes to brainstorm their ideas. Report outs should follow. Conclusion Discuss the following: A recent study by an executive search firm found that 77 percent of recruiters run searches of candidates on the Web to screen them; 35 percent of these same recruiters say they’ve eliminated a candidate based on the information they uncovered. What does this mean for young jobseekers with regard to online profiles? Discuss as a group some of the postings that young people preparing for



careers should be careful to avoid. Examples include: complaining about a former employer, showing pictures of hard partying, descriptions of sexual exploits, abusive or aggressive language, etc. Journaling Activity Think about your own personal texting and social media habits. How do you think the use of these technologies can support and help you feel more comfortable in face-to-face communications? Explain. Extension Activity According to CareerBuilder.com, there are three things you can do to protect your online image – and your job opportunities:

1. Be careful. Nothing is private. Don't post anything on your site or your "friends" sites you wouldn't want a prospective employer to see. Derogatory comments, revealing or risqué photos, foul language, and lewd jokes all will be viewed as a reflection of your character.
2. Be discreet. If your network offers the option, consider setting your profile to "private," so that it is viewable only by friends of your choosing. And since you can't control what other people say on your site, you may want to use the "block comments" feature. Remember, everything on the Internet is archived, and there is no eraser!
3. Be prepared. Check your profile regularly to see what comments have been posted. Use a search engine to look for online records of yourself to see what is out there about you. If you find information you feel could be detrimental to your candidacy or career, see about getting it removed – and in the meantime make sure you have an answer ready to counter or explain "digital dirt."



Ask participants to use these strategies to create a DO and DO NOT “cheat sheet” for people their parents’ age who are getting ready to look for a job. Help them to understand, in their terms, why they should be careful about their online postings.

19. Text Vs. Email...Does it Really Matter?

JUST THE FACTS: Though many teens and young adults consider email an “adult” way to communicate and would rather communicate in real-time with texting or other forms of social media, when it comes time to apply to college or for a job, email skills will most likely be necessary. Therefore, an understanding of “email etiquette” is worthy of discussion. This activity will offer participants the chance to challenge themselves to translate text to English and then discuss some of the classic rules of email.

Time 20 minutes

Materials • Activity 19a (Translating Text – one per participant) and Activity 19b (Email Etiquette)

Directions Disseminate Activity 19a and ask the group to translate the two text messages. This can be done in whatever way is most comfortable for the group (individually, in pairs, writing, sharing aloud, etc.). Share with the group.

Ask if the note to the employer would be appropriate to send? Discuss why or why not. Discuss the word “etiquette.” Ask participants if they know it’s meaning and ask for some examples.

Etiquette is the customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.





Some examples include table etiquette (napkin on your lap, do not talk with food in your mouth, etc.) and social etiquette (saying please and thank you, and excuse me when you interrupt, etc.).

Ask participants if they have ever heard of email etiquette? Ask about some of the instances where email would be more appropriate than texting? [Applying to college, emailing a professor or a teacher, writing to an employer, etc.]

Ask for some possible “rules” of email. Use Activity 19b as guide/template for discussion.

Conclusion Conclude by reviewing and discussing the suggested answers for Activity 19b. Additionally, address the use of personal email addresses vs. business/professional ones. Why should one avoid using email addresses such as hotfoxychick@xyz.net, itsallaboutme@abc.com, or partyanimal@mno.me when applying for a job?

Journaling Activity You own a business and have decided you need an email policy for your employees. What are the three most important factors you would like your employees to understand about using their business email accounts?

Extension Activity Use this opportunity to ensure all participants have an email account. If they do not, use a computer lab or arrange for time at a local library to ensure each has an account they can use for job searching and networking purposes. Of course, having an account and using one are two different things; write a note to each participant and practice exchanging email communications of a professional nature.

